

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to the Applicants' amendment submitted on November 06, 2008. In virtue of this amendment:

- Claims 2-3, 5, 7-8, 10, 12-13, and 17-18 are cancelled; and
- Thus, claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 14-16 remain pending in the instant application.

Examiner's Amendment

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Kenneth D. Springer on December 29, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 4, line 1, "claim 3" should be changed to --claim 1--; and

Claim 9, line 1, "claim 8" should be changed to --claim 6--.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 14-16 are allowed.

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Prior art of record fails to disclose or fairly suggest the following limitations:

- A method for open circuit voltage regulation for an electronic ballast, the method comprising sensing a tank current in the resonant tank circuit to produce a sensed output voltage signal; and limiting the output voltage when the sensed

output voltage signal exceeds the output voltage threshold limit by limiting a pulse width of pulses output from the regulating pulse width modulator, in combination with the remaining claimed limitations as claimed in independent claim 1 (claim 4 is allowed as being dependent on claim 1).

- A system for open circuit voltage regulation for an electronic ballast, the system comprising means for sensing a tank current in the resonant tank circuit to generate a sensed output voltage signal; and means for limiting the output voltage when the sensed output voltage signal exceeds the output voltage threshold limit by limiting the pulse width of the pulses, in combination with the remaining claimed limitations as claimed in independent claim 6 (claim 9 is allowed as being dependent on claim 6).
- An open circuit voltage regulation circuit for an electronic ballast, the regulation circuit comprising a resonant tank circuit; and a regulating pulse width modulator, wherein the regulating pulse width modulator limits the voltage at the output of the electronic ballast when the sensed output voltage signal exceeds the output voltage threshold limit by limiting a pulse width of pulses output from the regulating pulse width modulator, in combination with the remaining claimed limitations as claimed in independent claim 11 (claims 14-16 are allowed as being dependent on claim 11).

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably

accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Citation of Relevant Prior Art

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Prior art Yu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,098,606 B2) discloses electronic ballast with open circuit voltage control and cable compensation.

Prior art Jayaraman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,751,115) discloses lamp controller with lamp status detection and safety circuit.

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TUNG X. LE whose telephone number is (571)272-6010. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Douglas Owens can be reached on 571-272-1662. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TXL 12/29/2008

/Douglas W Owens/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2821
January 3, 2009